
Job Description

PUBLIC SAFETY TELECOMMUNICATOR

Western Massachusetts Regional Emergency Communications Center (WESTCOMM)

Position Description last Updated: August 2, 2019

General Statement of Essential Job Tasks:

The Public Safety Telecommunicator plays a critical role in emergency response. The Public Safety Telecommunicator is responsible for responding to emergency and non-emergency calls and providing critical, life-saving assistance to citizens requesting police or fire, and to the response units dispatched to handle the response. Through professional information gathering, the incumbent determines the nature of the call, whether a response is necessary and what type of assistance or information is needed. For calls requiring fire, medical or police response, the incumbent professionally dispatches the appropriate agency to the scene, maintaining proper computer records of all units dispatched.

Supervision Received:

This position reports to a Supervisor.

General Description of Essential Job Tasks:

The following are general descriptions of the essential job tasks of the position. Other related tasks may be assigned as necessary and appropriate.

Complies with all state and federal dispatch standards for telecommunications.

Answers calls for emergency and non-emergency response received via voice, text, TTY and video.

- Questions voice, text and TTY callers to determine the nature and location of the problem and extracts and records essential information.
 - Analyzes conflicting information and/or limited location information to direct first responders to the scene.
- Views, records, and disseminates to the appropriate responders, essential information provided through photo and video recordings.
- Contacts disconnects to determine nature and location of the problem and enters information as appropriate.

Dispatches, via a radio console or other electronic means, emergency and non-emergency incidents requiring fire, medical or police response according to priority and availability of units.

- Always maintains strict radio discipline.
- Complies with FCC regulations and agency/center procedures in the transmission of all radio traffic.

Monitors dispatched units' activities and receives and transmits to field units updated information as it's received.

- Takes protective actions for first responders by providing life-safety information during responses such as officer down and MAYDAY calls.
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Administers pre-arrival fire, medical and police instruction or directing calls through procedures such as CPR, childbirth, controlling of blood loss, submerged vehicle, hostage incident, or active shooter while emergency fire, medical and/or police services are enroute.

Gathers, analyzes and reports critical information during life-or-death situations such as crimes in progress, medical emergencies and fire/rescue incidents.

- Negotiates with suicidal callers or hostage takers while emergency responders are enroute.

Manages communications of emergency responders to incidents and assists with incident operations during events such as active shooter and officer down responses.

- Deploys to the scene of planned events, major emergencies or ongoing incidents as required by policy.

Enters incident data into computer aided dispatch systems and maintains various automated and manual logs, records and files relating to call-taking and dispatching activities.

Retrieves and accurately relays to requesting law enforcement field units, information contained in the local, state and national computer systems (*e.g. information regarding motor vehicles, driver's licenses, want and warrants, etc.*).

- Enters and maintains law enforcement data in the system(s) as appropriate.

Answers administrative telephone lines, provides routine non-technical information upon request, and refers all other inquiries to the proper person or department.

Provides new employee classroom training and on-the-job training.

- Participates in classroom training and on-the-job training.
- Completes training evaluation reports and monitors new employee performance during the on-the-job coach/trainee period.

Essential Knowledge, Skills and Abilities:

Oral and Written Communications:

Demonstrated skill or ability to:

- Speak English with enough clarity to be understood by others on the telephone, radio or in person.
- Actively listen to others for an understanding of their needs and situations.
- Assertively guide conversations in order to quickly and accurately gather pertinent information.
- Communicate critical information professionally and precisely to the proper recipient.
- Read and understand written correspondence, memoranda and directives.
- Ability to interpret Fire/Police Department rules and regulations and ability to explain such rules to the general public.
- Reports events and information in writing legibly and accurately, using proper English grammar and structure.

Decision Making/Problem Solving:

Demonstrated skill or ability to:

- Act in a decisive manner, using good, informed judgment (*common sense*).
 - Effectively prioritize situations and information and make appropriate decisions based on information received.
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- Effectively analyze conflicting and/or limited information.
 - Handle a variety of rapidly flowing information at once.
 - Perform multiple tasks simultaneously; be able to do several things at one time and remain focused under stress (*i.e., multi-tasking abilities*).
 - Adjust to new or unique situations.
 - Remember numerous details.
 - Maintain objectivity in the decision-making process.
 - Learn and apply new information.

Interpersonal Relationships:

Demonstrated skill or ability to:

- Represent the organization to other agencies and citizens with an unbiased, courteous, helpful, accurate and business-like attitude in all professional and personal contact.
- Ability to follow chain of command in the Communications Center in accordance with department policies and procedures.
- Work cooperatively with supervisors and establish cohesive, effective relationships with peers (*i.e., team worker abilities*).
- Detach from callers' emotions yet project an image of empathy (*i.e., avoid personal involvement*).
- Maintain appropriate and constructive behavior and attitude in response to difficult or adverse situations.
- Accept criticism and/or discipline without reacting defensively, rationalizing mistakes or blaming others for one's own failures.
- Act in a mature, dependable fashion.
 - Accept responsibility for actions.
 - Maintain dependable work habits such as reporting to work on time, with little prompting and intervention.
- Respect private, confidential information.
- Support and carry out directives.

Physical Abilities: Must have the ability to:

- Hear and understand sound sources coming through a communications headset and/or radio and/or standard telephone receiver, including the ability to hear and understand other outside sound sources while wearing a communications headset (*i.e., the ability to hear sound sources not coming through the headset; ability to hear through both ears*).
- Speak and write English clearly.
- Read and discern visual images on a variety of media, including the ability to read and understand maps, and the ability to distinguish between colors on a color-coded computer screen.
- Type accurately on a computer keyboard while conversing with callers and response units.
- Record names and numbers accurately (*i.e., not transpose numbers and/or letters*).
- Work all shifts of a 24-hour per day period and be available for emergency hold-over overtime and call-in overtime.

Technical Knowledge:

Must acquire and maintain a working knowledge of public safety communications equipment, practices and procedures including but not limited to:

- Knowledge of functions and operation of computer aided dispatch (CAD) system and manual call recording/dispatch system.
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- Knowledge of functions and operation of telephone console, radio console, TTY and other standard communications equipment.
 - Knowledge of FCC rules and regulations applicable to radio broadcasts.
 - Knowledge of how to use systems and resources to determine locations.
 - Knowledge of call-taking and dispatch techniques/procedures for handling incoming voice, text, TTY and video calls.
 - Knowledge of proper use of fire, medical and police protocol system.
 - Knowledge of proper use of local, state, and national computer systems and functions.
 - Knowledge of legal liability issues common to emergency call-taking, public safety dispatching and records keeping.
 - Knowledge of the geographical area served (*e.g., familiarity with street names/layout, landmarks, numbering schemes, rivers, lakes, freeways, neighborhoods, surrounding communities, etc.*).
 - Knowledge of proper preparation of required reports, logs and forms.
 - Knowledge of agency policies, procedures and standards of expected performance; keeps abreast and complies with all Communications Center guidelines, directives, announcements, special orders, policies and procedures.
 - Knowledge of available resource materials and their use in performing job duties (*e.g., manuals, directories, maps, etc.*).

Education and Experience Requirements:

- Must be at least 18 years old.
- High school diploma or equivalent, with two years of responsible full-time working experience.
- Minimum of one year of experience in operating communications equipment including, but not limited to, multi-line phones, computers, or two-way radios.

Special Necessary Qualifications:

- Must successfully pass a background check inclusive of a Massachusetts Board of Probation and an Interstate Identification Index records check; must comply with the minimal qualification guidelines established by the Criminal History Systems Board.
- Must possess a valid Massachusetts driver's license with a satisfactory driving record as a condition of initial and continued employment.
- Must successfully pass a medical examination including a hearing test and drug test, and psychological evaluation.
- Must be willing and able to attend job related and District mandated training; must acquire and/or maintain certification in CPR, CJIS/NCIC, Emergency Fire Dispatch, Emergency Medical Dispatch, Emergency Police Dispatch, NG9-1-1 certification and APCO PST1.
- Ability to type 30 words per minute.

Preferred Qualifications:

Experience in Public Safety Dispatching preferred. Certifications in CPR, CJIS, EMD, APCO PST1 or equivalents are preferred.

Technology:

Requires advanced computer skills in Microsoft Office Suite, such as Outlook, Word, and Excel.

Working Conditions and Requirements:

Work is mostly performed in an office environment. Regular and punctual attendance is a requirement. Maintains Communication Center work area and equipment in clean and working condition; performs janitorial functions in work area as needed.

Physical Requirements and Potential Hazards:

While performing the duties of this job, the employee is frequently required to sit, talk and listen for extended periods of time; use hands or fingers; handle or feel; talk and hear. The employee is required to reach with hands and arms. Requires the ability to operate a keyboard and mouse. The employee must occasionally lift and/or move up to 25 pounds. Specific vision abilities required by this job include close and distant vision and the ability to adjust focus; requires fully correctable close and distant vision and depth perception.

Salary/Benefits:

- Starting salary is \$42,120.
- Health insurance offered.
- Enrollment in Hampden County Retirement System.
- 4 and 2 schedule, providing 17 extra paid days off annually.
- Two weeks' vacation.

Position Content:

This job description is not intended to be and should not be construed as an all-inclusive list of all the responsibilities, skills, and working conditions associated with the position. While it is intended to accurately reflect the position activities and requirements, these requirements may change over time. Management reserves the right to modify, add or remove duties and assign other duties as necessary.

Application Process:

Applicants selected for employment must pass a background check, medical examination including a hearing test and drug test, and psychological evaluation.

Interested applicants should email a cover letter and resume to ehastings@westcomm-ma.gov or mail a hard copy to WESTCOMM, Attention: Erin Hastings, 110 Church Street, Chicopee, MA 01020.